Human Struggle During and After the Indian Partition : A Study of Select Non-fictional Works

A synopsis
submitted to

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

By

Mr. Sonkamble Ullas Ramkishan

Research Scholar,
Department of English,
Mahatma Gandhi Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedpur, Dist. Latur (Maharashtra)

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Under the supervision of

Dr. Laxman Dharmaraj Jogdand

Research Supervisor, Professor and Head,
Department of English,
Mahatma Gandhi Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedpur, Dist. Latur (Maharashtra)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 was one of the biggest events that changed the course of the history of India forever. It also has shaped the future of the two nations formed, India of Hindus and Pakistan of Muslims. India and Pakistan were celebrating their independence while facing the most ruthless and gruesome communal riots. It was definitelya victory in the political context but it was a defeat of India's colorful tradition, culture, multireligious identity and dignity. It was a defeat of human and moral values.Evil had certainly taken over humanity.India was known to the world as the land of peace and love. It was called the golden sparrow. But this sparrow was crushed brutally by the hatred and anger between the people who had been living peacefully for centuries.

India's long awaited freedom was accompanied by unimaginable, unexpected and unprecedented holocaust at the hands of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhswho targeted each other in the name of religion. The independence of India was gained by paying a heavy price. That price was widespread violence and massacre on the religious grounds. The partition was one of the most momentous events not only in the history of India but also in the history of the world. It is difficult to trace any other event with such a magnitude having far-reaching consequences. This tragedy has touched each and every human that lived in both the countries directly or indirectly. It took lives of men, women, children, animals and most importantly it tarnished the purpose of the human existence.

Not only religion and politics but also the feeling of insecurity,uncomfortand uncertainty of the common people of the communities involved was equally responsible for such unforgettable event. It was not just a political or religious error, it was also a human error. The ignited feelings of the common people were fuelled by the religious and political sentiments.

Our idea of partition is formed on the basis of the government archives and records. It is very much political. But there is an unheard history of the partition which involves the experiences of common people. As the common people started realising that the Indian subcontinent was being granted independence by the British empire, communal hatred and discussions started building up in and around the subcontinent. The partition of India and the catastrophe caused by it was a political as well as a human error. The written history gives us an idea about the high politics. But the fictional and non-fictional representation through literature tells us about

completely different dimension. It highlights the suffrage of the common man across the borders of the then newly formed India and Pakistan. The partition affected life at various levels. Politically and geographically, the Indian subcontinent was divided. Personally, familiesamd persons were separated. Their lives were shattered. They had nowhere to go. They were in dilemma. Their emotions, feelings, cries were deeply lost in the dark noise of the religious slogans and their bodies were smeared in the bloodshed that took place during the partition.

India had long been fighting for independence in a hope for new and better life. The common man was hopeful that independence would bring better livelihood and opportunities. India was like a tiger encaged in a circus which operated according to the wish of the British empire. When released by independence and wounded by partition,it found itself trapped in a zoo where many others were ready to eat its flesh.Between August 1947 and March 1948, forty five lac Hindus and Sikhs were forced to migrate from Pakistan to India. Sixty lac Muslims were made to relocate to Pakistan in the name of religion. Nearly one crore people lost their homes and everything forever. More than ten lac innocent people lost their lives for no fault of theirs.

The division of the subcontinent immediately catapulted widespread discussion and creation of a specific type of literature. This condemnable event boosted debates and made writers express themselves profoundly and profusely. This gave rise to the partition literature. This literature can be classified into two categories. One is the literature which highlights the causes of the partition and the violence caused by it. The othersheds light on the suffrage, trauma and loss faced and beared by the common people of both the countries. The partition literature can be found written in many genres like fiction, non-fiction, poetry and novels.

Partition literature is the reflection of the horrors of the religious cleansing. There have been many authors who have created fictional and non-fictional literature that sheds light on the true events of the partition that have been lying in the darkness for years. This unrevealed history needs to be unveiled.We must know our history in order to shape our future. We must learn lessons and draw conclusions from the partition and its legacy. All this can be done by studying the Indian,Pakistani and British writers who have written some of the most intriguing works.

The lost voices of slaughtered people,raped women and the cries of small children, all these unexpected things have been made alive by the fictional and non-fictional literature. The study of partition literature paves the way for a fuller understanding of the carnage. The situation in India at the time of partition and thereafter

warranted the creation of a kind of literature that would deal with the problem of communalism. In a way, this problem intensifies the creative urge not only of Indo-Pak writers but also of writers from other countries expressing themselves. After the freedom movement being on the top,the partition has been a favorite topic of the Indian English writers. Even after 75 years, new literary works are being written about the partition. So far nearly fifty literary worksof different genres dealing with one or the other aspect of the partition have been written. The presentation of the partition differs from work to work. There is a difference between the fiction and non-fiction related to partition but it has one common angle, the human angle. Partition of India was a significant event in history of India which has tinted golden pages of Indian history. The events of the partition have always fascinated the generations. However, very few people know about the true events during the partition and its consequences and outcomes.

India has long been a patriarchal society where men are treated like owners. Women have always been suppressed, oppressed, treated like a thing meant for pleasure and have always been taken for granted by the male dominated culture. The partition of India left no stone unturned to damage womens' emotions while they were abducted, kidnapped, tortured, raped and murdered by the men of both the countries. It is said that nearly one lac women were kidnapped and raped. Hindu and Sikh women were targeted by the Muslim men while Muslim women were tortured by the Sikh and Hindu men. It was a tit for tat game for both the communities in which the dice was thrown by the political leaders. Unimaginable numbers of innocent women were engulfed in the fire and fury that had broken out fuelled by religious intolerance and sentiments. While men were busy in fighting this civil war, women and their children paid a very heavy price.

Women have always been a subject of pride and honor for thepatriarchal Indian society. Because of this only, women were targeted by the men to satisfy their male-centric ego. This veiled history of the partition of India has been buried for a long time. The writings of the women writers shed light on the emotions of the women of that time. These women writers have brought forward the world of women during and after the great division of India.

Literary works like "The Other Side of Silence:Voices from The Partition of India" written by Urvashi Butalia, Kamla Bhasin's "Borders and Boundaries:Women in India's Partition", "The Footprints ofPartition:Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians" penned by Anam Zakaria tell the stories of people based on the real life accounts narrated by victims of partition and their descendants who have faced the unbearable turmoil of the partition. Some writers have created the most intriguing stories through their non-

fictional writings. These include "Partition:The Long Shadow" edited by Urvashi Butalia, Kavita Puri's "Partition Voices:Untold British Stories", "Forgotten Atrocities:Memoirs of a Survivor of the 1947 Partition of India" by Bal K. Gupta, Yasmin Khan's "The Great Partition", "The Punjab Bloodied,Partitioned and Cleansed:Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy Through Secret British Reports and First Person Accounts" by Ishtiaq Ahmed, Shadakshari Settar's "Pangs of Partition : The Human Dimension Volume 2" and "The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia : Refugees,Boundaries,Histories" penned by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar.

The stories, thoughts and ideas presented by these writers give us an idea about the partition through human perspective. These stories, thoughts and ideas provide us with a more nuanced perspective on the topic. All thesewriters have written heart-wrenching stories about loss and inhumanity - a result of the forced migration that left many lacs of people poor and homeless. In all the writings by thewritersof different nationalities and different origins, we encounter innocent common people who have suffered from this inhumane tragedy.

The violence that accompanied partition was characterized by murder, destruction of religious places, houses of the other community and profaning everything that was held sacred. The magnitude of sexual violence experienced by women during the partition remains unparalleled. Sexual violence is considered as not only an assault on that particular woman but against her family / community and above all honour of the community. A woman is seen as the representative of her family, community and nation's honour and her identity is intrinsically linked with her body and her being. Her protection is not so much about the protection of the individual woman's autonomy and dignity as it is about her family, community and nation's identity and autonomy.

The partition of India also is widely remembered for gender-based violence against women. Firstly, the violence inflicted on women by men of the opposite religious group that involved kidnapping, rape, and mutilation of the genitalia or public humiliation. The supposed aim of this kind of violence was to abase the men of the rival religion to which the women belonged. A second form of violence against women included the violence inflicted on women by their own family members. This could vary from honour killings to the insistence of male kin that their mothers, daughters, or wives commit suicide in order to safeguard the purity and chastity of the community. Both forms of violence substantiate the claim that women were not treated as humans but rather as markers of communal and national pride.

Women writers like Urvashi Butalia, Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon have written extensively on violence that took place during the partition. They argue that the primary motive behind violence against women was familial, national and religious honour. The women were treated like mascots of national and communal pride andhonor. Women have been regarded as the symbol of purity, pride, honour, culture and community in the Indian subcontinent. In this regard,the men of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities tried to guard thewomen of their own community while abducting, raping, torturing and mutilating the women of other communities. This unprecedented and unimagined communal attack have been documented by many authors. The lost voices of the raped women, cries of the small children and slaughtered people and the personal and familial anglehasbeen made alive by women writers through the partition literature. The study of partition literature paves the way for a fuller understanding of the catastrophe. The situation in India at the time of partition and thereafter warranted the creation of a kind of literature that would deal with the problem of communalism and its various aspects. In a way, this problem intensified the creative urge not only of the Indian,English and Pakistani writers but also of writers expressing themselves in indigenous languages.

After the freedom movement being on the top,the partition has been a favorite topic of the Indian English female writers. Even after 75 years, new literature is being produced about the partition. So far nearly hundred works dealing with one or the other aspect of the partition have been written. The presentation of the partition differs from work to work. But all of it has a very common aspect that is the suffrage, loss and pain beared by the women of that time and how it has impacted the generations. As women are the central figure in the Indian culture, so the partition literature deals with their world and the people involved in their lives. It talks about how partition affected the women directly and their families indirectly.

In order to understand the partition of India and its impact on the common lives, we ought to study not only Indian writers but also writers from Pakistan as well as Britain. Because the partition involved people from India, Pakistan and Britain. To get a more nuanced and detailed information about the happenings during and after the partition, works of the writers of all these nationalities must be explored. As partition of India was a human tragedy, not only India but people from Pakistan have also suffered equally. As it is well said that every coin has two sides, it is important to get to know the thoughts of the people who reside elsewhere in the world because of migration and have experienced the partition and have their roots in the Indian subcontinent.

In order to unveil the hurt and pain beared by innocent people and their loved ones before, during and after the partition, we ought to dive deep into the writings of the writers mentioned above. Some have written

about the real life accountswhile some have voiced the muted victims through non-fictional works.The Partition of India brought with it the never imagined exodus of human lifewhich shook India and Pakistan from inside.In this regard, many writers have tried to recover the history of partition through recording personal accounts and oral narratives of those who survived in the violence and trauma of partition. This has offered a different perspective on the history of partition. Thus, this research will focus on therecovery of the history of partitionwhich tries to look at how ordinary people have experienced the partition, their quest for identity,the way the state and the community tried to control the society.

This research will study the non-fictional writings of writers from India, Pakistan and Britainthat chronicle and explore the event from all sides of the borders. It will highlight how India was divided into two nations on the basis of religion. The religious conflict that took place between the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities will be thoroughly studied and discussed in this research with the help of non-fictional English literature which includes personal experiences, first-hand accounts, oral narratives, memories of the victims of the partition of India. It will also explore the writers, whose families were affected by the partition, expressing their thoughts and ideas about the partition, it’s impact on the common people in the short as well as the long run.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many works have been penned by the Indian and Pakistani writers which have voiced the voiceless victims of the partition of India. The Indian subcontinent fought the most brutal civil war during and after the partition which claimed hundreds of thousands of innocent lives. It is estimated that during the partition, nearly 75,000 to 1,00,000 women were abducted by the people of other religious parties to be raped or murdered, or sold into prostitution, or forced into marriage. The trauma left by partition remains a major concern of Indian literature after independence. Several books on partition and partition novels are available. All these books deal with various aspects of the event as the responses of creative writers.

The partition of India boosted a widespread discussion regarding changing national scenario and the destiny of India and Pakistan. It brought a whole new type of literature known as partition literature. Both old age and new age writers have tried to make sense of horror and violence against women through their own words. Many fictional and non-fictional works have been created by them which deal with womens' world during and after the partition. These literary works focus mainly on women and their surroundings which include their families, loved ones, friends and all other things which were directly or indirectly connected to them and which were affected by the partition and it's aftermath.

In order to understand the partition of India and it's effects on the Indian subcontinent, it is necessary to get to know the thoughts of writers from India, Pakistan and Britain. Not only their thoughts but also the thoughts and emotions of victims and survivors who have been made to speak by these writers are essential. As this research will explore the human dimension of the Indian partition, writers and people from all sides of borders must be given equal importance in order to justify the human dimension.

1) Indian Writers

I. The Other Side of Silence:Voices from the Partition of India

Famous Indian feminist writer and activist, Urvashi Butalia in her famous book "The Other Side of Silence:Voices from the Partition of India" says that "Twelve million people were displaced as a result of Partition. Nearly one million died. Some 75,000 women were raped, kidnapped, abducted, forcibly impregnated by men of the 'other' religion, thousands of families were split apart, homes burnt down and destroyed, villages abandoned. Refugee camps became part of the landscape of most major cities in the north, but, a half century

later, there is still no memorial, no memory, no recall, except what is guarded, and now rapidly dying, in families and collective memory". In the same book, she has recalled a memory of her household as follows :

“Such good relations we had that if there was any function that we had,then we used to call Musalmaans to our homes,they would eat in our houses,but we would not eat in theirs and this is a bad thing,which I realize now.If they would come to our houses we would have two utensils in one corner of the house,and we would tell them, pick these up and eat in them;they would then wash them and keep them aside and this was such a terrible thing.This was the reason Pakistan was created.If we went to their houses and took part in their weddings and ceremonies,they used to really respect and honour us.They would give us uncooked food,ghee,atta,dal,whatever sabzis they had,chicken and even mutton,all raw.And our dealings with them were so low that I am even ashamed to say it.A guest comes to our house and we say to him,bring those utensils and wash them,and if my mother or sister have to give him food,they will more or less throw the roti from such a distance,fearing that they may touch the dish and become polluted...We don’t have such low dealings with our lower castes as Hindus and Sikhs did with Musalmaans". This shows that there hatred prevailing between the communities which had not come out until the partition happened. The partition of India paved a way for these communities to bring out their sentiments and emotions in the name of religion. This, according to her, was one of the major reasons behind the great division of the Indian subcontinent and creation of India and Pakistan on the basis of religion.

“The Other Side of Silence:Voives from the Partition of India”, published in 1998, directly deals with the feelings and emotions of the people who have gone through the upheaval of the partition. It is written by interviewing the victims and their descendants based on their oral narratives and testimonies. This work focuses on the people who have suffered rather than the politics which led them towards the partition. It talks very less about who did it and talks more about what it did to us. The partition has long been seen as a political event by generations. Very few people know the actual events. But they always have been curious about the actual happenings. There is a gap between the real history and the common people. Urvashi Butalia has tried to fill this gap by placing the common people and their experiences at the center. She has explored the human aspect,the most important part of any society.

Urvashi Butalia conducted interviews of actual victims of the partition violence as well as their descendants for over a decade. She studied diaries, letters, memoirs, documents of the parliament in order to concretise her say about the partition. Before doing so, she unfols the history of her own family which witnessed the events that occurred before and after the partition and the various aspects of her own family in order to

understand the common household and its mindset. The people she interviewed say that the partition still continues to haunt them and they still can not come to a conclusion. The mindset and the bitterness out of it still prevails.

"The Other Side of Silence:Voices from the Partition of India" brings forward the plight of Hindus and Sikhs who were forced to migrate to India. This work focuses on the people from the Punjab region which is the most affected geographical area during the partition. Urvashi Butalia has made 70 people speak from their heart and pour out everything that was suppressed within them. She has made them express themselves and has connected it with her own thoughts. She has written about the marginalised people of the Indian society and how they dealt with the partition. She tells about how the Hindu and Sikh families killed their own wives, daughters and children in order to defend familial honour and pride associated with the women in the society.

Butalia stresses the trauma beared by women and children who suffered the most because of the partition. She points out that none of this reality has ever been mentioned in the official documents. The stories about the partition of India would have died with its victims and survivors if Urvashi Butalia had not interviewed them thoroughly for her book "The Other Side of Silence:Voices from the Partition of India".

II. Borders and Boundaries:Women in India's Partition

"Borders and Boundaries:Women in India's Partition" is a work authored by Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon published in 1998. They have penned it by keeping women at the centre. We have a lot of official accounts of the partition. But we have very less number of works citing social and personal history of people and especially women who participated in the partition. There are very few female-oriented accounts. "Borders and Boundaries:Women in India's Partition" focuses the personal experiences and narratives and takes help of the official documents in order to bring out womens' world during and after the partition. Bhasin and Menon talk about women's struggle with their citizenship, dilemma regarding where to go after partition and their struggle for religious indentity.

Through this book, both the writers have highlighted womens' lives during the holocaust of the partition and its impact on ordinary women. Their feminist perspective brings out the suppressed emotions and thoughts of women. They have interviewed survivors on both sides of the border dividing India and Pakistan. They have used women's experiences, official accounts, archives and the reports of many charitable organisations dedicated forupliftment of victims of partition. The partition of Punjab is the central theme of this literary work.

Apart from studying the torture and loss of life, this work focuses mainly on the various ways in which women survived.

"Borders and Boundaries:Women in India's Partition" is the story of women who were killed, lost, raped and widowed during the massacre. It tries to get to know how they struggled for survival as some lost their families, some were raped, some widowed and some disowned by their loved ones. During this great migration, some women succeeded in crossing the border but many could not do it. Such women were kidnapped and abducted by the men of opposite communities. They were manhandled, tortured, raped and were made to forcibly marry the abductors and rapists. Some were even married with their rescuers. They had to choose what came their way out of having no option.

Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon begin their work by emphasizing on how women were instructed or forced to commit mass suicide, had their body parts such as their feet, hands, and breasts cut off, and were kidnapped and raped in the midst of the regional conflict between the different religious ethnic groups such as the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. But they try to touch another aspect. They divulge in the historic process of recovery of targeted women. In this work, the authors portray the women who were targeted as victims and the women who rescued and rehabilitated them as saviors. They focus on the victimisation and rescue of the women at the hands of another women.

III. Partition:The Long Shadow

"Partition:The Long Shadow" Urvashi Butalia is a collection of essays by scholars. They have expressed their views regarding the partition of India. The partition has cast a long shadow on the lives of people of India and Pakistan. The borders that were drawn in 1947 not only divided nations but also families and friends. The essays in this collection explore the idea of identity, belonging and foreignness. This collection contains essays from scholars talking Bangladesh which was once a part of Pakistan until it was divided in 1971.

This collection contains twelve essays from twelve different scholars talking about different things related to partition in some or other way. This collection not only explores the event and its consequences but also other things such as culture, literature and art that came out as a result of the partition of India. It explores all these things as mediums of expression in the post-partition India.

All the essays in this collection touch a new dimension as they examine regions like Ladakh and Assam which are less talked about when it comes to the partition of India and its consequences.

IV. Forgotten Atrocities:Memoirs of a Survivor of the 1947 Partition of India

Bal K. Gupta's "Forgotten Atrocities:Memoirs of a Survivor of the 1947 Partition of India" is an eye-witness account which tells the horrific stories of the holocaust during the religious cleansing of India in 1947. This book talks about the killings of Hindu and Sikh people at the hands of the Pakistani army done in Mirpur, a village in Punjab. Mirpur was a small city situated in Jammu and Kashmir on the border of India and Pakistan.Like mllions of people, the people of Mirpur too were forced to migrate to India after it was invaded by the Pakistani army. This army was supported by the Pathan community, a clan related to Islam.

The migration was supposed to be a peaceful and an orderly event. But lack of proper attention by the Indian administration led Mirpur into havoc and it saw one of the most brutal and gory atrocities done on Hindus and Sikhs by Muslims, including the Pakistani army. Nearly fifteen thousand Hindus and Sikhs were killed by the Pakistani army in the name of religion.

Bal K. Gupta himself is a descendant of the people who were murdered during the invasion in Mirpur. His grandmother, paternal uncle and great grandfather were killed. Many of his loves ones and close family members were victimised in some other way by the Muslim community and the Pakistani army.

V. Pangs of Partition : The Human Dimension Volume 2

Indian Council of Historical Research has brought forward the people's history through their experiences, recollections and reminiscences. Edited by Indian scholars Shadakshari Settar and Indira Gupta, it contains eyewitness acoounts, testimonials and oral narratives of the existing victims, desecendants and survivors as well as people who had played different roles during and after the partition of India.

2) Pakistani Writers

I. The Footprints of Partition:Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians

"The Footprints of Partition:Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians" is a recollection of memories of four generations of Pakistani and Indian people who have directly or indirectly experienced the great partition of India. It is written by modern age Pakistani historian and educationist Anam Zakaria. She takes interest in oral history and politics related to identity of common people. She throws light on the facts by

interacting with the actual victims of the partition and their successors. She has tried to make them recall the scenario of the partition. She also has urged the survivors of the partition victims to narrate the stories told by their elders who had actually seen the communal riots and its results and impact on India and Pakistan at large.

Anam Zakaria has interviewed seventeen people of different age groups who have shared different experiences and expreseed different thoughts about one common thing, partition and how it affected them. The idea about writing this book was instant, she says. While on a train journey one day, her mind was stuck with this idea as she had conversed on the previous day with an old man about his trial to return to Amritsar which he had left during partition as a child. His choked words made her take more interest in the partition and its impact on individuals. “The Footprints of Partition:Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians” voices the muted Pakistanis and Indians who have never been asked about their feelings, thoughts regarding their upheaval because of the partition.

Zakaria has done close conversations with seventeen people in and around Lahore having different backgrounds and from different socio-economic classes. She has tried to understand the consequences partition had on different stratas of the society. Most of the interviewees have shared the memories of torture, rape, abduction, looting, kidnapping, death and displacement. All the information she got from them is general in nature that is the scenario of partition and its impact. But she stumbled upon one more important thing which she considers very important. Many of interviewees shared the human side. The human emotions that had been under wraps for years have been unwrapped by Anam Zakaria through her book.

Many of the interviewees have shared their personal lives, how their families were affected in the short as well as long term. They have talked about how Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs participated in different festivities, how they ate sweets given by one another and how these familial relations were instantly shattered due to partition. But most of them have said that the love and affection they shared with one another is still there. This human angle has been explored by Anam Zakaria through her impelling book.

“The Footprints of Partition:Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians” has been divided into four parts which contain forteen chapters in total. Each chapter is attributed to one person, either Pakistani or Indina, expressing her memories of the pre-partition and post-partition scenarios and their impact on their lives. Each part has been written with a specific purpose. The first part focuses on the border disputes, the

second one highlights the familial trauma, the third chapter talks about memories of the past where as the last one sheds light on people who try to make sense of everything that took place.

II. The Punjab Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed : Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy Through Secret British Reports and First Person Accounts

Swedish political scientist and author of Pakistani descent Ishtiaq Ahmed has unravelled the bloody and inhumane history of the partition of the Punjab region through his book "The Punjab Bloodied,Partitioned and Cleansed:Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy Through Secret British Reports and First Person Accounts". It is a chronological account of what happened in 1947 when the Punjab Province of British India was partitioned. Ahmed has traced survivors and eyewitnesses and have recollected their memories in this book. Besides shedding new light on the events through secret British reports, this book contains touching accounts by eyewitnesses, survivors and participants in the holocaust, from both sides of the border of India. This book highlights the role of religious differenecs and these differences were used by the political leaders who knowingly led the innocent people towards the unwanted bloodbath.

III. The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia : Refugees,Boundaries,Histories

"The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia:Refugees,Boundaries,Histories" is an impelling book written by Pakistani author Vazira Fazila Yacoobali Zamindar. She has brought out the role of the Indian and the Pakistani administrations in shaping the massive displacement of millions of people during and after the partition. She underlines how these administrations were busy in drawing the political borders by forgetting the human angle of their actions. This book explores ethnography and archives and focuses oral history of the partition of India. Fazila has documented the heart-wrenching stories of the north Indian Muslims who were divided between Delhi and Karachi because of the partition. She has studied Urdu newspapers and government records of both India and Pakistan. Ordinary people, their lives and thoughts have been put forth in this book. It talks about the Muslim community and it's marginalization at large. Divided in seven chapters, this book discusses various angles of the partition.

3) British Writers

I. Partition Voices : Untold British Stories

"Partition Voices:Untold British Stories" is a non-fictional book written by Kavita Puri,a British writer. This book contains interviews of the British people who witnessed the partition of India in 1947. All these

British people originate from the Indian subcontinent but reside in Britain. Published in 2019, this new age work talks about the turbulent scenario of the great division of India and shattering creation of two countries based on religion. It offers real life stories narrated by the people of the Indian origin during the partition.

This book has stories which tell about the collateral damage partition did and how people of both the countries were caught in the chaos. Kavita Puri has made these people express themselves. She has explored the humane side of the partition. Kavita Puri, while living in Britain,came across many people who were of the Indian origin and were displaced because of the partition. They were made to flee or left India according to their own will. Experiencing the trauma of the partition or ashamed of what they did during it with their own hands, they were silent and were dealing with it emotionally and mentally over the years.

Kavita Puri's own father is one of the close witnesses of the partition of India. He has provided the details of the months leading to the partition in 1947. He has talked about the division and uncertainty regarding citizenship and how millions had to suffer and pay unaffordable price. In this book, we come across people who were children during the partition and saw women being raped and killed, saw mass killings and destruction everywhere. They also provide stories of bravery and heroism of the people who tried their best to fight the violence that had erupted.

We meet many characters throughout this memoir telling different stories about one common thing that is the partition and their involvement in the whole process. They talk about their personal lives and their connection to the events. All of them regret doing one or other thing during the partition. Some of them can be seen as contended souls as they consider their acts justifiable. Each and every story in this book makes us understand the partition, its background and its consequences and how it still continues to live in the minds of people.

II . The Great Partition

Prominent British writer Yasmin Khan has examined the context,execution and aftermath of the partition of India. She talks about death,displacement,rape and plunder which hit the common people at large in this book. She also draws our attention towards the mindlessness and recklessness of the process through which the partition took place. "The Great Partition" mainly focuses on the great human loss and how it still continues to haunt the generations. Through this book, she has analysed all the aspects of the partition including the past,present and future of the countries created after it.

Yasmin Khan has touched all the aspects of the division of India thorugh political,social and human perspective. So it is necessary to study her non-fictional book to understand the legacy of the partition. It will surely help us to understand the consequences of the communal violence and how it makes the human society pay vehemently.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are as follows :

1. This research mainly focuses the partition of India and its consequences on both the nations namely India and Pakistan seen through the non-fictional works of writers from India, Pakistan and Britain.
2. To explore the impact of the partition on the lives of common people.
3. To focus on the partition through the human dimension, the human emotions and the human relations in the context of the aftermath of the partition.
4. To study the old age and the new age writers and the methods used by them while voicing the victims of the partition.
5. To study the works of the writers other than writers of the Indian origin to study the partition and its effects on a larger scale out of India.
6. To get a balanced idea about the partition of India and it’s effect on the people of not only India but also Pakistan and Britain through the writings of writers from all these nationalities.
7. To bring forward the consequences and impact of religious and communal violence during and after the partition of India.

4. HYPOTHESIS

The partition of India is a lesser known topic to the citizens of India, especially the youth. 15th August is celebrated as the independence day in India. But very few citizens know the cost at which it was gained. Most of the citizens, especially youngsters, can not tell anything about the independence excluding the date and some facts like the British empire and Pakistan.

Partition was a major national tragedy and a momentous event in the history of India that shaped India's future. Partition and it's causes are still prevalent in the Indian society. Those causes are communal hatred and religious difference between the two countries. All of us know about the independence of India, but very few of us know its backdrop. We were freed but paid a very high and unaffordable price for which we still are indebted. Such was the magnitude of the loss incurred on India.

It is necessary to bring forward the untold stories of the division of the Indian subcontinent. It is the need of the hour that we show today's youth what it is to kill someone in the name of religion. Today's youth should know the consequences of communal hatred so the history will not be repeated. One should learn from history to secure a good future.

Partition literature is the best medium through which we can highlight the tragedy of the millions of common people, both Indians and Pakistanis, in order to bring awareness in today's generation. Apart from the political context, human angle is very important when it comes to society and its existence. Partition literature serves to this demand of exploration of human society and its place before, during and after the partition of the Indian subcontinent.

Any such event with great historical importance and with unimaginable magnitude must be studied thoroughly in order to understand its significance. Many writers have created befitting literature which serves this purpose. The writers selected in this project were somehow and somewhere deeply affected on the personal front. They have released their emotions and the emotions of millions of others through their literary depictions of the partition. They have made it clear that those who suffered it still have not been able to come to a concrete conclusion. The questions which were raised at the time of partition still haunt them and are still unanswered.

Why was partition done?, what did we get from it? and what has it done to us?

This research will mainly focus on the question “what has partition done to us?”

The proposed research will focus on this question and will highlight the non-fictional works of Indian, Pakistani and British writers. This research will be carried on the partition of India by studying “The Other Side of Silence:Voices from The Partition of India” written by Urvashi Butalia, Kamla Bhasin’s “Borders and Boundaries:Women in India’s Partition”, “The Footprints ofPartition:Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians” penned by Anam Zakaria tell the stories of people based on the real life accounts narrated by victims of partition and their descendants who have faced the unbearable turmoil of the partition. Some writers have created the most intriguing stories through their non-fictional writings. These include “Partition:The Long Shadow” edited by Urvashi Butalia, Kavita Puri’s “Partition Voices:Untold British Stories”, “Forgotten Atrocities:Memoirs of a Survivor of the 1947 Partition of India” by Bal K. Gupta, Yasmin Khan’s “The Great Partition”, “The Punjab Bloodied,Partitioned and Cleansed:Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy Through Secret British Reports and First Person Accounts” by Ishtiaq Ahmed, Shadakshari Settar’s “Pangs of Partition : The Human Dimension Volume 2” and “The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia : Refugees,Boundaries,Histories” penned by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar.

All these non-fictional literary works will be deeply studied in order to bring forward the impact of the partition on the Indian subcontinent on the personal, social and human front at large in the short as well the long run. This research project will highlight the partition of India, its consequences, its impact and how people of both the countries formed have dealt with it over the years.

5. SCOPE, UTILITY AND LIMITATION

A) Scope

This research topic has a lot of scope in terms of history and its understanding by today's generation. The history of independence of India has two sides just like a coin. One is the much sought after independence and another is the lesser discussed and the lesser known partition and its long drawn shadow. The writers under consideration in this research thesis have brought forward the human aspect of the inhumane, brutal and horrific past of India and how it still is relevant in today's scenario. All the writers whose works will be studied in this thesis have gathered real life experiences of the actual survivors of the partition and their descendants. So the non-fictional partition literature studied in this thesis will be a genuine way as it offers real life accounts and creates real life scenario for better understanding. So it will be very interesting and useful to study the creative literary response of the writers exploring the partition of the Indian subcontinent in many ways.

B) Utility

Literature is generally not considered as a useful medium in terms of gaining something. But partition literature surely helps us to get a deeper understanding of the history of mid-twentieth century India and Pakistan as this shattering history and its ripples can still be experienced in religious, communal and social terms. This researchwill bring out the real history of India in front of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities on the religious and social grounds. The writers of the partition literature and their creativity while perceiving the phenomenon of partition will give a positive direction to the sentiments of the common people. As this research will contain the literary works based on real life accounts, it will bring genuinty to the objectives of this research project. It also will help us understand the consequences of communal hatred on human society.

C) Limitation

This research will be based on the non-fictional literary works expressing real human thoughts and ideas. Non-fictional partition literature explores real life accounts and depicts real scenarios backed by concrete information. So there will be no literary and artistic expressions and ideas.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PLAN OF WORK

A) Research Methodology

Library research methodology will be adopted in this research work.It will include analysis of literary works highlighting real life experiences, events narrated directly by the people who actually witnessed the partition of India. Handbook of MLA 9th edition will be used to cite the sources and for the style of referencing.

The researcher will study and analyse the non-fictional works of Indian, Pakistani and British writers. These works are "The Other Side of Silence:Voices from The Partition of India" written by Urvashi Butalia, Kamla Bhasin's "Borders and Boundaries:Women in India's Partition", "The Footprints ofPartition:Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians" penned by Anam Zakaria tell the stories of people based on the real life accounts narrated by victims of partition and their descendants who have faced the unbearable turmoil of the partition. Some writers have created the most intriguing stories through their non-fictional writings. These include "Partition:The Long Shadow" edited by Urvashi Butalia, Kavita Puri's "Partition Voices:Untold British Stories", "Forgotten Atrocities:Memoirs of a Survivor of the 1947 Partition of India" by Bal K. Gupta, Yasmin Khan's "The Great Partition", "The Punjab Bloodied,Partitioned and Cleansed:Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy Through Secret British Reports and First Person Accounts" by Ishtiaq Ahmed, Shadakshari Settar's "Pangs of Partition : The Human Dimension Volume 2" and "The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia : Refugees,Boundaries,Histories" penned by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar.

All the books mentioned above give an important insight of the partition of the Indian subcontinent and its impact on the masses in the short as well as the long run. All the non-fictional works are written by writers who are emotionally attached to the history of partition of India. So this thesis will analyse the genuine human thoughts.

B) Plan of Work

1.Introduction

This first chapter will provide a brief introduction to this research thesis. It will highlight the background of the partition of India. Further, it will analyse the pre-partition and post-partition scenario of the Indian subcontinent. It also will put forward the research problem and hypothesis. The first chapter also will analyse the themes, styles and trends adopted by the writers of the partition literarture.

2. The Indian Writers

This chapter will discuss the partition through the writings of the Indian writers. It will include Uravshi Butalia's idea of partition and its impact on the people who witnessed it through her book "The other Side of Silence:Voices from the Partition of India". It will focus the thoughts, emotions, agony and pain being beared by the victims of the partition and how it still haunts the common people who participated. Through the interviewsconducted by Butalia and presented in the famous book, we will come to know about the dilemma, uncertainty of the people during that time and Urvashi Butalia's personal connection with it. The second book in this chapter will be "Borders and Boundaries:Women in India's Partition" penned by Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon. Special attention will be given to women and their world, place and role in the Indian partition by studying this book. Indian subcontinent has long been a patriarchal set-up since the beginning. Renowned feminist authors Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon, both having Indian origin and having worked in the feminist movement, have talked about the personal history of people especially women in this book. This chapter will look at the partition thorugh the female perspective and what it took for them to deal with the blurred path of their life because of the partition.

"Partition:The Long Shadow" will be the third non-fictional writing in this chapter dedicated to the Indian writers. Edited by Urvashi Butalia, it is a collection of essays by many scholars talking about the partition. It highlights the thoughts of the people who have to say something concrete about the communal upheaval of India. All of them have offered something different about the partition which can be summed up in accordance with one single issue, the partition and its shadow that has been cast on the common man continuously. This chapter will follow this shadow through these scholars' words and will look at the real face of the partition and how it still continues to affect the citizens of the countries formed in 1947.

Bal K. Gupta's "Forgotten Atrocoties : Memoirs of a Survivor of the 1947 Partition of India" will unveil the atrocities committed by the common people, armies of states and communities involved in the partition.It will look at the migration that took place during the months preceeding and succeeding the partition. Mirpur, a small city in Jammu and Kashmir, was caught amidst the havoc unleashed by the Pakistani army with the help of the Pathan community. It also will discuss the failure of the Indian administration and how it led to massacre of Hindu and Sikh communities at the hands of the Muslim community. Bal K. Gupta, the writer of this book, opens up about the partition and atrocities committed by communities and how it still continues to affect him as his own family members were victimised.

The last book in this chapter will be Shadakshari Settar's "Pangs of Partition:The Human Dimension Volume 2".

3. The Pakistani writers

It is very essential to get to know what the Pakistani writers have to say about the partition and it's impact on the common lives. This chapter will follow the trails of the bloodbath and horros of the religious violence that had broken out during the partition. The first Pakistani writer in this chapter will be Anam Zakaria,famous new age Pakistani writer, talking about the partition through her book "The Footprints of Partition : Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians". This book brings out the suppressed feelings of the four generations of the Pakistani and Indian citizens who actually witnessed the partition. Not just them, their descendants have also been interviewed by the writer. So we will get to know the oral stories told by them which are told to them by their elders. This book explores the consequences of the great division and its long drawn effect on the subcontinent from 1947 till date.

"The Punjab Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed:Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy Through Secret British Reports and First Person Accounts", the second book in this chapter, is written by Ishtiaq Ahmed, a well known Pakistani author. He focuses the Punjab region from the period of partition in a non-fictional manner. He has explored the partition of the Punjab region with the help of secret British reports. It also brings forward the horrors of the partition through eyewitness accounts, stories told by survivors and those who participated in the great religious cleansing of Punjab in 1947. Ahmed has tried to draw conclusion from both sides of the border by interviewing people from both India and Pakistan. It will be very interesting to get to know the partition of India, particularly of Punjab, through this book.

Vazira Fazila Yacoobali Zamindar will be the last writer to be studied in this chapter dedicated to the Pakistani thoughts about the partition of India.Her book "The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia:Refugees,Boundaries,Histories" is a non-fictional account of the partition of India supported by ethnographic and archival research. She has analysed the political process of the partition and how it affected the common people across the then newly formed borders. More than that, she also has brought together oral histories of the partition through real life stories told by the common people. Apart from studying the official reports of the governments of India and Pakistan, Vazira Fazila also has interviewed survivors of the partition to bring originality. So it will be helpful in unveiling the horrific history and legacy of the partition of India.

4. The British Writers

It is important to understand the thoughts of the people having Indian origin but spread across the world who participated in the partition of India. All these people may live elsewhere but their hearts are still achingbecause of the trauma they suffered and the actions they did during the partition. This chapter will try to get to know their regrets about the year 1947 and the years following it. This chapter will be dedicated to the British writers expressing their thoughts about the partition and how they still continue to remember the pain and hurt even if they no longer reside in India and Pakistan.

Kavita Puri will be the first British writer in this chapter aimed at studying the British thoughts about the patition of India. Her book "Partition Voices : Untold British Stories" contains interviews of the British people who witnessed the partition of India in 1947. All these British people originate from the Indian subcontinent but reside in Britain. Published in 2019, this new age non-fictional work talks about the turbulent scenario of the great division of India and shattering creation of two countries based on religion. It offers real life stories narrated by the people of the Indian origin during the partition. This book has stories which tell about the collateral damage partition did and how people of both the countries were caught in the chaos. Kavita Puri has made these people express themselves. She has explored the humane side of the partition. Kavita Puri, while living in Britain, came across many people who were of the Indian origin and were displaced because of the partition. They were made to flee or left India according to their own will. Experiencing the trauma of the partition or ashamed of what they did during it with their own hands,they were silent and were dealing with it emotionally and mentally over the years.

Kavita Puri's own father is one of the close witnesses of the partition of India. He has provided the details of the months leading to the partition in 1947. He has talked about the division and uncertainty regarding citizenship and how millions had to suffer and pay unaffordable price. In this book, we come across people who were children during the partition and saw women being raped and killed, saw mass killings and destruction everywhere. They also provide stories of bravery and heroism of the people who tried their best to fight the violence that had erupted. We meet many characters throughout this memoir telling different stories about one common thing that is the partition and their involvement in the whole process. They talk about their personal lives and their connection to the events. All of them regret doing one or other thing during the partition. Some of them can be seen as contended souls as they consider their acts justifiable. Each and every story in this book

makes us understand the partition, its background and its consequences and how it still continues to live in the minds of people.

The last British writer to be studied for this research will be Yasmin Khan. Yasmin Khan has touched all the aspects of the division of India thorugh political, social and human perspective in her book “The Grat Partition”. She talks about death, displacement, rape and plunder which hit the common people at large in this book. She also draws our attention towards the mindlessness and recklessness of the process through which the partition took place. “The Great Partition” mainly focuses on the great human loss and how it still continues to haunt the generations. Through this book, she has analysed all the aspects of the partition including the past,present and future of the countries created after it. So it is necessary to study her non-fictional book to understand the legacy of the partition. It will surely help us to understand the consequences of the communal violence and how it makes the human society pay vehemently.

5. A Balanced Overview

This chapter will look at the partition of India through a neutral perspective. It will discuss the literature studied in this research in a more balanced and nuanced way to justify the purpose of this research. Not only Indian but also people from Pakistan and even people of the British origin were equally affected by the partition. So it is essential to get to know what the writers from all these three backgrounds have to say about the partition and it’s legacy. As this research is inclined towards examining the human tragedy and cost of the partition, it is necessary to look at the partition through the eyes of the common people. People from India, Pakistan and Britain have equally paid a heavy price because of the partition. So this chapter will explore the previous three chapters dedicated to the writers from India, Pakistan and Britain and will discuss their non-fictional works in a balanced way and will bring out one common answer for the question that is “what has partition done to us” ?

Here, ‘us’ means people from India, Pakistan as well as Britain.

6. Conclusion

This concluding chapter will sum up the idea of the partition of India and it’s effect on the societies of India and Pakistan. It also will take into consideration the opinion of people from India, Pakistan and Britain. It will explore the human idea of the partition and how it can be unserstood by us through the literature studied in this research thesis. It also will focus the trends and styles of the writers and how they have penned the horrors

of the religious cleansing and its literary accounts in non-fictional manner. In addition to this, the last chapter also will discuss the history of religious violence in India and will talk about its consequnces.

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Research Scholar
Mr. Sonkamble Ullas Ramkishan
Department of English
Mahatma Gandhi Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedpur, Dist. Latur

Research Supervisor